

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

8	MICHAEL ROGER NELSON,	)	
9		)	
10	Plaintiff,	)	NO. CV-03-5126-MWL
11	v.	)	ORDER GRANTING DEFENDANT'S
12	GARY LOCKE, et. al.,	)	MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT
13	Defendants.	)	

On February 28, 2005, Defendant moved for summary judgment. (Ct. Rec. 60.) On March 14, 2005, the Plaintiff moved for an extension of time in which to respond to the summary judgment motion. (Ct. Rec. 67.) The Court granted Plaintiff's motion for an extension of time and sent Plaintiff the required summary judgment information applicable to pro se plaintiffs. In response to Defendant's motion for summary judgment, Nelson filed a document entitled "Material Facts in Opposition to Defense Motion for Summary Judgment," (Ct. Rec. 79), consisting of some 323 pages of various documents. The parties consented to proceed before a magistrate judge. (Ct. Rec. 35.) The matter now before the Court is Defendant's motion for summary judgment of Plaintiff's §1983 civil rights claims, set without argument on April 29, 2005. Plaintiff alleges violations of the RLUIPA, retaliation by prison

1 officials for exercising his constitutional rights, and violations  
2 of the Eighth and Fourteenth amendments.

3 Careful review of Nelson's submissions in opposition to the  
4 summary judgment demonstrates that the arguments raised by the  
5 defendants in their summary judgment motion remain unanswered and  
6 in most cases are supported by Nelson's documentation. For  
7 example, Plaintiff's documents at 247-249 show that Plaintiff's  
8 concern regarding cold temperatures in his cell was investigated  
9 and he was moved.

#### 10 I. Summary Judgment

11 When considering a motion for summary judgment pursuant to  
12 Fed. R. Civ. P. 56, the court's role is not to weigh the evidence,  
13 but merely to determine whether there is a genuine issue for  
14 trial. *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 249 (1986);  
15 *Freeman v. Arpaio*, 125 F. 3d 732, 735 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997). Summary  
16 judgment is appropriate if, after viewing the evidence in the  
17 light most favorable to the party opposing the motion, the court  
18 determines that there is no genuine issue of material fact and the  
19 moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. *Vander v.*  
20 *United States Dep't of Justice*, 268 F. 3d 661, 663 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
21 2001).

22 "[A] party seeking summary judgment always bears the initial  
23 responsibility of informing the district court of the basis for  
24 its motion, and identifying those portions of [the record] which  
25 it believes demonstrate the absence of a genuine issue of material  
26 fact." *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986); see  
27 also *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 256.

28 A party opposing a properly supported motion for summary

1 judgment must set forth specific facts showing that there is a  
2 genuine issue for trial. *Harper v. Wallingford*, 877 F. 2d 728, 731  
3 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1989). To establish the existence of a genuine issue of  
4 material fact, the non-moving party must make an adequate showing  
5 as to each element of the claim on which the non-moving party will  
6 bear the burden of proof at trial. *See Celotex Corp.*, 477 U.S. at  
7 322-23. The opposing party may not rest on conclusory allegations  
8 or mere assertions, *see Leer v. Murphy*, 844 F. 2d 628, 631 (9<sup>th</sup>  
9 Cir. 1988), but must come forward with significant probative  
10 evidence, *see Sanchez v. Vild*, 891 F. 2d 240, 242 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1989).  
11 The evidence set forth by the non-moving party must be sufficient,  
12 taking the record as a whole, to allow a rational jury to find for  
13 the non-moving party. *See Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith*  
14 *Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574, 587 (1986). Where "the factual context  
15 renders [the non-moving party's] claim implausible . . . , [that  
16 party] must come forward with more persuasive evidence to support  
17 [its] claim than would otherwise be necessary" to show that there  
18 is a genuine issue for trial. *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co.*, 475  
19 U.S. at 587.

20 The materiality of facts is determined by looking to the  
21 substantive law that defines the elements of the claim. *Nidds v.*  
22 *Schindler Elevator Corp.*, 113 F. 3d 912, 916 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996).

## 23 II. RLUIPA violation

24 Plaintiff's first claim is that prison officials violated the  
25 Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, 42  
26 U.S.C. §2000cc et seq. ("RLUIPA".) This statute provides that "no  
27 government shall impose a substantial burden on the religious  
28 exercise" of prisoners unless the government can demonstrate that

1 the burden both serves a compelling government interest and is the  
2 least restrictive means of advancing that interest. 42 U.S.C.  
3 §2000cc-1(a); *Mayweathers v. Newland*, 314 F. 3d 1062 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
4 2002). A substantial burden means "a significantly great  
5 restriction or onus" on a person's religious exercise. See *San*  
6 *Jose Christian College v. City of Morgan Hill*, 360 F. 3d 1024,  
7 1033-34 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2004).

8 Defendant points out that Plaintiff admitted during his  
9 deposition that "his world view based on race is not a religion."  
10 (Ct. Rec. 61 at p. 4.) Plaintiff nonetheless argues that his world  
11 view based on race implicates his religious exercise. Defendant  
12 also notes that Plaintiff fails to identify any regulation that  
13 substantially burdened the practice of his questionable religion.  
14 For the sake of argument, it appears that Plaintiff's specific  
15 RUILPA challenges relate to three matters, and for purposes of  
16 this motion the Court will assume that Mr. Nelson's racial views  
17 are a religion.

18 Plaintiff first alleges that he was deprived of his rights  
19 under the RLUIPA because he was required to attend a cultural  
20 diversity course. On October 25, 2002, Mr. Nelson read and signed  
21 a Washington State Penitentiary Reintegration Contract. (Ex. 6;  
22 Ct. Rec. 61 at 7.) By signing this contract, Plaintiff agreed to  
23 participate in cultural diversity classes. After signing the  
24 contract Mr. Nelson was placed back in the general population.  
25 (Ct. Rec. 61 at 19. ) He eventually attended the cultural  
26 diversity class and wrote a thesis paper where he acknowledged  
27 that he enjoyed the class, that "it has opened my eyes to some  
28 shocking realities. The 'class' curriculum is tyranny of all other

1 groups over Anglo-Nordic males." (Ct. Rec. 79 at 37.)

2 Plaintiff alleges he was substantially burdened in his  
3 ability to practice his white supremacist religion when he  
4 attended the required cultural diversity course "because all the  
5 stories in the book were from a non-white perspective." (Ct. Rec.  
6 61 at 83.) This apparently offended the Plaintiff's racial views.  
7 The Defendant responds that the course was part of a disciplinary  
8 process to reintegrate Plaintiff into the general population, and  
9 the course is designed to further the goal of reducing tension  
10 among inmates of different races and cultural backgrounds.

11 The Ninth Circuit has upheld policies prohibiting the  
12 preaching of racial hatred and violence for obvious security  
13 reasons. *See McCabe v. Arave*, 827 F. 2d 634, 637 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1987).  
14 Requiring attendance at a course designed to improve prison  
15 security does not substantially burden Plaintiff's religious  
16 exercise; nor does mere offense rise to the level of a substantial  
17 burden on Plaintiff's right to religious exercise. Mr. Nelson's  
18 required attendance at a cultural diversity course following his  
19 discipline for threatening behavior does not establish a violation  
20 of the RLUIPA. This claim fails.

21 Plaintiff contends his rights under the RLUIPA were violated  
22 when prison authorities confiscated a book and a magazine  
23 belonging to him. These materials apparently espoused Plaintiff's  
24 ideals of white supremacy. It is undisputed that these materials  
25 were found in another inmate's cell, not in Mr. Nelson's. (Ct.  
26 Rec. 61 at 72; 81.) According to the Defendant, leaving one's  
27 belongings in another person's cell violates institutional policy:  
28 an item not in the owner's possession is contraband. (DOC Policy

1 Directive 440.00 Inmate Property; Ct Rec. 61 at 7.) At his  
2 deposition Plaintiff admitted that he knew of this regulation. In  
3 his response to this motion Plaintiff submitted materials that, on  
4 the one hand, indicate he mistakenly left the materials in the  
5 wrong location, and on the other hand contend that he was sharing  
6 information regarding "religious" views. (Ct. Rec. 79 at 156.)  
7 Because the materials were confiscated due to their location,  
8 rather than their content, the confiscation of these items by  
9 prison officials does not violate the RLUIPA. This claim fails.

10 Plaintiff alleges that prison officials substantially  
11 burdened his exercise of religion when they refused to send a  
12 tithe or money offering on his behalf. Mr. Nelson wanted to send  
13 his tithe to an individual who was not named on his visitor's  
14 list. This is prohibited by the DOC Policy Directive 200.00, Trust  
15 Accounts for Offenders. (Ct. Rec. 61 at 7.) Prison officials told  
16 Plaintiff that he could have his tithe sent to a church or  
17 organization, or to someone on his visitor's list. After being  
18 advised of this policy, Plaintiff elected not to send a tithe.

19 There is no showing that this regulation substantially  
20 burdened Plaintiff's exercise of religion since he could have sent  
21 his tithe to a church or an organization. This claim fails.

22 **III. Retaliation for exercising constitutional rights in**  
23 **violation of 42 U.S.C. §1983.**

24 Plaintiff next argues that prison officials retaliated  
25 against him for exercising his constitutional rights in violation  
26 of 42 U.S.C. §1983. Defendant answers that Mr. Nelson has not made  
27 out a viable civil rights claim.

28 "Traditionally, the requirements for relief under [section]

1 1983 have been articulated as (1) a violation of rights protected  
2 by the Constitution or created by federal statute, (2) proximately  
3 caused (3) by conduct of a 'person' (4) acting under color of  
4 state law." *Crumpton v. Gates*, 947 F. 2d 1418, 1420 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
5 1991). Or, more simply stated, courts require plaintiffs to "plead  
6 that (1) the defendants acting under color of state law (2)  
7 deprived plaintiffs of rights secured by the Constitution or  
8 federal statutes." *Gibson v. United States*, 781 F. 2d 1334, 1338  
9 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1986).

10 "A prisoner suing prison officials under §1983 for  
11 retaliation must allege that he was retaliated against for  
12 exercising his constitutional rights and that the retaliatory  
13 action does not advance legitimate penological goals, such as  
14 preserving order and discipline." *Barnett v. Centoni*, 31 F. 3d  
15 813, 815-16 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1994) (per curiam); see also *Vignolo v.*  
16 *Miller*, 120 F. 3d 1075, 1077-78 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997). Such claims must  
17 be evaluated in light of the deference that must be accorded to  
18 prison officials. See *Pratt v. Rowland*, 65 F. 3d 802, 807 (9<sup>th</sup>  
19 Cir. 1995). The prisoner must submit evidence to establish a link  
20 between the exercise of constitutional rights and the allegedly  
21 retaliatory action. Compare *Pratt* (finding insufficient evidence)  
22 with *Valadingham v. Bojorquez*, 866 F. 2d 1135, 1138-39 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
23 1989) (finding sufficient evidence). Finally, the prisoner must  
24 demonstrate that his First Amendment rights were in fact chilled  
25 by the alleged retaliatory action. See *Resnick v. Hayes*, 213 F. 3d  
26 443, 449 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2000).

27 Plaintiff alleges retaliation by prison officials Pease,  
28 Holevinski, Schettler, and Buttice.

1       Pease. Plaintiff alleges that Clifford Pease retaliated  
2 against him by failing to investigate his grievance and by voting  
3 against his custody promotion. The record shows that prison  
4 officials investigated Mr. Nelson's grievance. (Ex. 8; Ct. Rec. 61  
5 at 143.) Consequently, this claim fails because it has no support  
6 in the record. With respect to voting against Plaintiff's custody  
7 promotion, a prisoner has no liberty interest in a particular  
8 classification or custody level. *Sandin v. Connor*, 515 U.S. 472,  
9 476 (1995). Accordingly, Plaintiff's lack of custody promotion  
10 cannot establish retaliation. In addition, Mr. Nelson fails to  
11 establish any link between his religious exercise and retaliation  
12 by Pease. Consequently, neither of Plaintiff's bases establish his  
13 claim of retaliation by Pease.

14       Schettler. Plaintiff alleges that Carla Schettler retaliated  
15 by failing to investigate his grievance and by having him sign the  
16 reintegration contract. As noted, prison officials investigated  
17 Plaintiff's grievance. (Ex. 8.) And, as noted, no constitutional  
18 rights were chilled by having Plaintiff agree to remedial  
19 measures, including attending a cultural diversity course, in  
20 order to earn his return to the general population after being  
21 disciplined for threatening behavior, a clear security concern.  
22 His claim of retaliation by Schettler fails.

23       Buttice. Plaintiff alleges that Melissa Buttice retaliated by  
24 premising his custody promotion on Plaintiff not submitting any  
25 further grievances. Buttice denies this. (Ct. Rec. 61 at 140.) The  
26 defendant correctly points out, however, that even if true, verbal  
27 threats or harassment are insufficient to establish a  
28 constitutional violation. (Ct. Rec. 61 at 8), citing *Gaut v. Sunn*,



1 810 F. 2d 923 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1987).

2 Holevinski. Plaintiff alleges that Holevinski retaliated by  
3 recommending that Mr. Nelson be maintained at close custody.  
4 However, as the Defendant correctly points out, this  
5 recommendation was based the seriousness of Mr. Nelson's criminal  
6 behavior, the length of his remaining time, and his poor overall  
7 institutional adjustment. (Ct Rec. 61 at 9; Ex. 9.) These factors  
8 influence the safety and security of the prison, and as such are  
9 proper reasons for the custody level determination. Additionally,  
10 as noted, there is no liberty interest in a particular  
11 classification or custody level. *Sandin*, 515 U.S. at 476. Mr.  
12 Nelson also fails to establish any link between his religious  
13 practice and retaliation. His claim of retaliation by Holevinski  
14 fails.

#### 15 IV. 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment rights

16 "It is undisputed that the treatment a prisoner receives in  
17 prison and the conditions under which [the prisoner] is confined  
18 are subject to scrutiny under the Eighth Amendment." *Helling v.*  
19 *McKinney*, 509 U.S. 25, 31 (1993); *see also Farmer v. Brennan*, 511  
20 U.S. 825, 832 (1994).

21 Conditions of confinement may, consistent with the  
22 Constitution, be restrictive and harsh. *See Rhodes v. Chapman*, 452  
23 U.S. 337, 347 (1981); *Osolinski v. Kane*, 92 F. 3d 934, 937 (9<sup>th</sup>  
24 Cir. 1996). Prison officials must, however, provide prisoners with  
25 "food, clothing, shelter, sanitation, medical care, and personal  
26 safety." *Toussaint v. McCarthy*, 801 F. 2d 1080, 1107 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
27 1986); *see also Johnson v. Lewis*, 217 F. 3d 726, 731 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
28 2000); *Hoptowit v. Ray*, 682 F. 2d 1237, 1246 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1982).

1       When determining whether the conditions of confinement meet  
2 the objective prong of the Eighth Amendment analysis, the court  
3 must analyze each condition separately to determine whether that  
4 specific condition violates the Eighth Amendment. *See Cabrales v.*  
5 *County of Los Angeles*, 864 F. 2d 1454, 1462 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1988)  
6 (subsequent history omitted); *Toussaint*, 801 F. 2d at 1107. "Some  
7 conditions of confinement may establish an Eighth Amendment  
8 violation 'in combination' when each would not do so alone, but  
9 only when they have a mutually enforcing effect that produces the  
10 deprivation of a single, identifiable human need such as food,  
11 warmth, or exercise - for example, a low cell temperature at night  
12 combined with a failure to issue blankets." *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501  
13 U.S. 294, 304 (1991). When considering the conditions of  
14 confinement, the court should also consider the amount of time to  
15 which the prisoner was subjected to the condition. *See Hutto v.*  
16 *Finney*, 437 U.S. 678, 686-87 (1978); *Hoptowit*, 682 F. 2d at 1258.

17       As to the subjective prong of the Eighth Amendment analysis,  
18 prisoners must establish prison officials' "deliberate  
19 indifference" to inhumane conditions of confinement to establish  
20 an Eighth Amendment violation. *See Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 834;  
21 *Wilson*, 501 U.S. at 303.

22       Plaintiff alleges his cell was without adequate heat for two  
23 days during January of 2004. He stated at his deposition that "it  
24 was several degrees below zero outside and there was ice in my  
25 cell. And they refused to give me an extra blanket." (Ct. Rec. 61  
26 at 49.) Mr. Nelson admitted that "the weather exceeded the design  
27 capacity for the facility." (Id.) At the time Mr. Nelson  
28 complained to officials about the cold, he asked to be moved, to

1 be given extra clothing, or to be issued two extra blankets.  
2 (Plaintiff's Statement of Material Facts at 247-49.) He was moved.  
3 (Id.)

4 On this record, Plaintiff fails to establish deliberate  
5 indifference to inhumane conditions of confinement. Mr. Nelson  
6 complains that officials failed to provide an extra blanket -  
7 meaning that although the temperature was cold for two days, he  
8 did have a blanket. Plaintiff admitted the weather exceeded the  
9 building's [heating] capacity, defeating his claim of deliberate  
10 indifference. The undisputed facts presented are that Mr. Nelson  
11 was in a cold cell for two days, he was provided with a blanket  
12 but not an extra blanket, he admitted that cold weather exceeded  
13 the building's capacity, and he was moved to another cell. This  
14 does not show deliberate indifference on the part of prison  
15 officials constituting cruel and unusual punishment as proscribed  
16 by the Eighth Amendment.

17 Plaintiff alleges his rights under the Eighth Amendment were  
18 violated when he was placed in administrative segregation. As  
19 noted previously, there is no constitutional right to a particular  
20 custody level. Plaintiff does not establish that his custody level  
21 violated his rights under the Eighth Amendment. During his period  
22 of confinement in administrative segregation, Mr. Nelson was  
23 permitted outdoor exercise. He took his meals in his cell. He does  
24 not allege that he was deprived of any of his basic needs while in  
25 administrative segregation as required by the Constitution. This  
26 claim fails.

27 Plaintiff next alleges that the medical care he received  
28 amounted to a violation of his rights under the Eighth Amendment.

1 Defendant responds that Mr. Nelson fails to establish deliberate  
2 indifference to a serious medical need.

3 Deliberate indifference to a prisoner's serious illness or  
4 injury states a cause of action under section 1983. *Estelle v.*  
5 *Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 105 (1976); see also *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.  
6 3d 1122, 1131 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2000)(en banc). This rule applies to  
7 "physical, dental, and mental health." *Hoptowit v. Ray*, 682 F. 2d  
8 1237, 1253 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1982). In deciding whether there has been  
9 deliberate indifference to an inmate's serious medical needs, the  
10 court need not defer to the judgment of prison doctors or  
11 administrators. See *Hunt v. Dental Dep't*, 865 F. 2d 198, 200 (9<sup>th</sup>  
12 Cir. 1989)(citation omitted). State prison authorities have wide  
13 discretion regarding the nature and extent of medical treatment.  
14 *Jones v. Johnson* 781 F. 2d 769, 771 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1986).

15 A serious medical need exists if the failure to treat a  
16 prisoner's condition could result in further significant injury or  
17 the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain. *McGuckin v. Smith*,  
18 974 F. 2d 1050, 1059 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1992), *overruled on other grounds*,  
19 *WMX Techs., Inc. v. Miller*, 104 F. 3d 1133, 1136 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.  
20 1997)(en banc)(internal quotation omitted). The court should  
21 consider whether a reasonable doctor would think that the  
22 condition is worthy of comment, whether the condition  
23 significantly affects the prisoner's daily activities, and whether  
24 the condition is chronic and accompanied by substantial pain. See  
25 *Lopez*, 203 F. 3d at 1131-32.

26 The medical record shows that Mr. Nelson has been treated for  
27 depression and anxiety, and for chronic folliculitis, a recurring  
28 condition. (Ex. 10.) Doctors have prescribed several medications,

1 including antibiotics. (Id.) As the Defendant correctly notes,  
2 there is nothing in the record indicating that Mr. Nelson did not  
3 receive proper treatment for his medical conditions. (Ct. Rec. 61  
4 at 14-15.) It appears that Plaintiff was given his prescribed  
5 medication. (Id.) The record also shows that apparently Mr. Nelson  
6 did not complain about his medical care until he filed his  
7 complaint. Because there is no factual support for it in the  
8 record, Plaintiff's claim of deliberate indifference to his  
9 medical needs fails.

#### 10 **V. 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment rights**

11 To articulate a due process claim under section 1983, an  
12 inmate must first establish that he enjoys a protected liberty  
13 interest. *Arce v. Walker*, 139 F. 3d 329, 333 (2d Cir. 1998). When  
14 deciding whether the Constitution itself protects an alleged  
15 liberty interest of a prisoner, the court should consider whether  
16 the practice or sanction in question "is within the normal limits  
17 or range of custody which the conviction has authorized the State  
18 to impose." *Meachum v. Fano*, 427 U.S. 215, 225 (1976); *see also*  
19 *Hewitt v. Helms*, 459 U.S. 460, 466-70 (1983).

20 Plaintiff argues that placing him in administrative  
21 segregation based on a decision by a review committee of three  
22 members violated his right to due process. Defendant responds that  
23 transfer among various security classifications is within the  
24 expected terms of prisoner confinement and is thus not protected  
25 by the due process clause. Alternatively, Defendant maintains that  
26 the procedures which led to Mr. Nelson's placement comported with  
27 due process in that he was able to appeal the classification  
28 determination and his custody level was timely reviewed within the

1 schedule set by institutional policy. (Ct. Rec. 61 at 18-19.) The  
2 documents filed by Plaintiff in response to this motion show that  
3 on several occasions he filed grievances, participated in  
4 grievance procedures, and appealed decisions following these  
5 procedures.

6 With respect to placement in administrative segregation, the  
7 Due Process Clause itself does not grant prisoners a liberty  
8 interest in remaining in the general population. *Sandin v. Conner*,  
9 515 U.S. 472, 485-86 (1995); *Hewitt*, 459 U.S. at 468.

10 Additionally, the procedures afforded Mr. Nelson for placing  
11 him in administrative segregation included a determination by a  
12 review committee of three members, the ability to appeal the  
13 decisions, and timely review. (Ex. 5.) Mr. Nelson fails to  
14 establish that these procedures afforded him anything less than  
15 due process.

## 16 VI. Defenses

17 Defendant raises the defenses of lack of personal  
18 participation, improper reliance on the doctrines of respondeat  
19 superior and vicarious liability, application of the 11<sup>th</sup>  
20 Amendment, and qualified immunity.

21 With respect to defendants Locke, Lehman and Thatcher,  
22 Defendant opines that Plaintiff fails to establish personal  
23 participation by any of them and instead improperly relies on  
24 theories of respondeat superior and vicarious liability. (Ct. Rec.  
25 61 at 16.)

26 "Liability under [§] 1983 arises only upon a showing of  
27 personal participation by the defendant. A supervisor is only  
28 liable for the constitutional violations of . . . subordinates if

1 the supervisor participated in or directed the violations, or knew  
2 of the violations and failed to act to prevent them. There is no  
3 respondeat superior liability under [§] 1983." *Taylor v. List*, 880  
4 F. 2d 1040, 1045 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1989)(citation omitted); *Ortez v.*  
5 *Washington County*, 88 F. 3d 804, 809 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996)(concluding  
6 proper to dismiss where no allegations of knowledge of or  
7 participation in alleged violation).

8 Defendant is correct. Plaintiff admitted in his deposition  
9 that he is suing Governor Gary Locke under a theory of  
10 supervisory, rather than participatory, liability. (Ct. Rec. 61 at  
11 87; 20-25; 88.) Plaintiff similarly admits suing Joseph Lehman as  
12 DOC Secretary and James Thatcher because he is a "figurehead."  
13 (Ct. Rec. 61 at 88; 18-25; 89.) Mr. Nelson sues Associate  
14 Superintendent Al Scamahorn because Plaintiff was "going through  
15 the chain of command." (Ct. Rec. 61 at 91.) Consequently,  
16 defendants' motion to dismiss Mr. Nelson's claims against Locke,  
17 Lehman, Thatcher and Scamahorn is **GRANTED** because Plaintiff  
18 alleges no personal participation by these named defendants.

19 In a similar vein is Plaintiff's claim against Richard  
20 Morgan. Mr. Nelson sues him because he is the WSP Superintendent  
21 and because Plaintiff served him with a form letter advising that  
22 he (Mr. Nelson) was being retaliated against. Plaintiff states  
23 that he mailed this just before filing the lawsuit. (Ct. Rec. 61  
24 at 89.) Mr. Nelson is also suing Morgan because he is unhappy that  
25 some of his appeals were denied. (Ct. Rec. 61 at 90.) Plaintiff's  
26 claim against Mr. Morgan fails because again it is not premised on  
27 Mr. Morgan's personal participation, and the defendants' motion to  
28 dismiss Mr. Nelson's claim against Mr. Morgan is **GRANTED**.

1 Mr. Nelson sues Ron Knight because he continued him in  
2 administrative segregation. (Ct. Rec. 61 at 92.) As noted, this  
3 alone does not raise constitutionally protected interests.  
4 Similarly, Plaintiff sues Mr. Ramsey because he reviewed one of  
5 Mr. Nelson's classification forms. (Ct. Rec. 61 at 117.) The  
6 motion to dismiss Plaintiff's claim against Knight and Ramsey is  
7 **GRANTED.**

8 With respect to the remaining defendants, the Court finds  
9 that Plaintiff fails to properly assert a constitutional  
10 violation. Even if plaintiff had established a constitutional  
11 violation, summary judgment in favor of defendants would still be  
12 proper because of qualified immunity.

13 "[G]overnment officials performing discretionary functions  
14 [are entitled to] a qualified immunity, shielding them from civil  
15 damages liability as long as their actions could reasonably have  
16 been thought consistent with the rights they are alleged to have  
17 violated." *Anderson v. Creighton*, 483 U.S. 635, 638  
18 (1987)(citations omitted); see also *Sorrells v. McKee*, 290 F. 3d  
19 965, 969 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2002).

20 Qualified immunity is only an immunity from suit for damages.  
21 It is not an immunity from suit for declaratory or injunctive  
22 relief. See *Los Angeles Police Protective League v. Gates*, 995 F.  
23 2d 1469, 1472 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1993).

24 Analyzing qualified immunity is a three-step process. First,  
25 the court must consider whether the facts "[t]aken in the light  
26 most favorable to the party asserting the injury . . . show that  
27 the [defendant's] conduct violated a constitutional right."  
28 *Saucier v. Katz*, 533 U.S. 194, 201 (2001). Second, the court must



1 determine whether the right was clearly established at the time of  
2 the alleged violation. *Saucier*, 533 U.S. at 201. Finally, the  
3 court must conclude whether a reasonable officer in these  
4 circumstances would have thought her or his conduct violated the  
5 alleged right. *Saucier*, 533 U.S. at 205.

6 The plaintiff bears the burden of proving that the right  
7 allegedly violated was clearly established at the time of the  
8 violation; if the plaintiff meets this burden, then the defendant  
9 bears the burden of establishing that the defendant reasonably  
10 believed that the alleged conduct was lawful. *See Sorrels v.*  
11 *McKee*, 290 F. 3d 965, 969 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2002).

12 Plaintiff fails to establish in the first instance a  
13 violation of his constitutionally protected rights. Even if Mr.  
14 Nelson could be seen as meeting this burden, however, the record  
15 reveals that the defendants reasonably believed that their conduct  
16 toward Mr. Nelson was lawful. On this basis the defendants are  
17 entitled to qualified immunity as a matter of law.

18 The Court finds that plaintiff fails to set forth specific  
19 facts showing that there is a genuine issue of material fact for  
20 trial.

21 Accordingly,

22 Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment (**Ct. Rec. 60**) is  
23 **GRANTED.**

24 **IT IS SO ORDERED.** The District Court Executive is hereby  
25 directed to enter this Order, enter judgment for Defendant and  
26 furnish copies to Plaintiff and to counsel.

27 **DATED** this 2nd day of May, 2005.

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s/ Michael W. Leavitt

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MICHAEL W. LEAVITT  
United States Magistrate Judge

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